



Knowledge, for the Taking

Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal

—T.S. Eliot

TRUE, I'M A WRITER, BUT THE KNOWLEDGE SHARING Initiative has taught me that the same sentiment applies for project managers: Take from the lessons and accomplishments of the best. And we're not talking imitation—there is no flattery here—this is all-out thievery. Make someone else's story your own story, make someone's lessons learned your own. Gather all the tidbits of best practices and leadership to become integral parts of your own project management style, not to be goals you strive to reach. Take knowledge, live it, and claim it as your own.

The first time you do it, you might look over your shoulder a little. There might be some guilt attached to learning from the stories of the best of the best and slipping the lessons quietly into your proverbial pocket. In Larry Goshorn's article, *Knowledge Stealing Initiative*, he describes this coming-to-terms with Knowledge Sharing. The difference between that and a misdemeanor? NASA's Academy of Program and Project Leadership (APPL) Master's Forum presenters, workshop participants, and storytellers—they want you to use their stories and lessons and experiences! They are holding them out to you, leaving them unattended with your name on them, hoping you won't have to stumble down the same difficult roads if they could just hand you their conclusions.

You're already familiar with most of the ways that APPL works with project managers like you to get knowledge out there for the taking. In future issues you'll see how we're continuously changing to make sure you always get the valuable information that you need. During the coming months we'll introduce you to experienced project managers who are joining ASK's editorial staff to add relevance and credibility to its stories. In 2005, we'll begin a quarterly publication schedule allowing us to add more stories, more practices, and more knowledge in each issue for you to pillage.

In this issue of ASK alone you'll find out how applying Earned Value Management to projects can help turn them around. You'll read the lessons one retired NASA PM learned throughout his career and see how far project management at NASA has come over the years. You'll absorb the knowledge that many people on a project have to offer and how to balance work and family during collocation. You'll find an illustration meant to stimulate discussion about APPL's Knowledge Sharing Initiative. And that's just what you'll see in print...

Go to the APPL website and you'll find much more knowledge to steal. (Of course, we prefer to call it collaboration.) Search the ASK archives for the many lessons of issues past. Take a look at the Master's Forum stories and slides, and experience them without stepping foot out of your office. Click on links to other project management resources—most recently we've established a content-sharing relationship with GovSig's online publication—and see what's going on in project management beyond the world of NASA.

It may seem a little counterintuitive at first—we're told plagiarism is punishable and identity fraud even worse! But fight these urges to play it safe. Use the many resources that APPL makes available. Grab what you can, slap your name on ideas that were someone else's first, call up a story as if it were part of your own project management past. Start here and now with these very pages. And if you're still feeling guilty, make sure no one is looking. •